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common ground

FREE MAGAZINE

Kinder Morgan, HELL NO!
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Cholesterol myth wastes billions
Mass surveillance Canada
Hallelujah Leonard Cohen
Make Canada debt free
Optimal winter health



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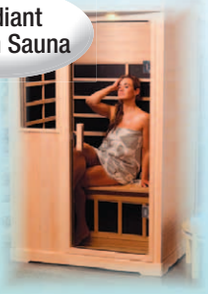
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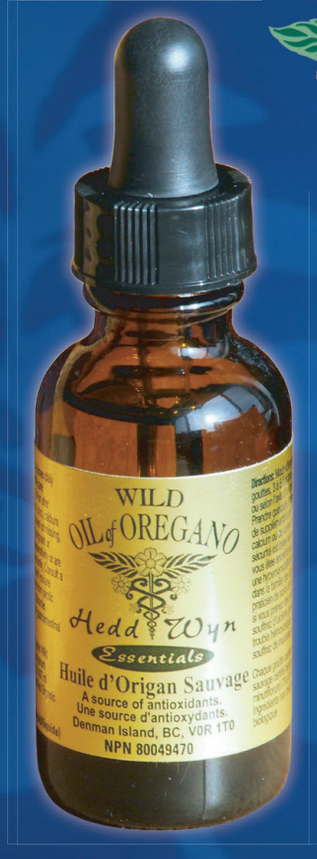
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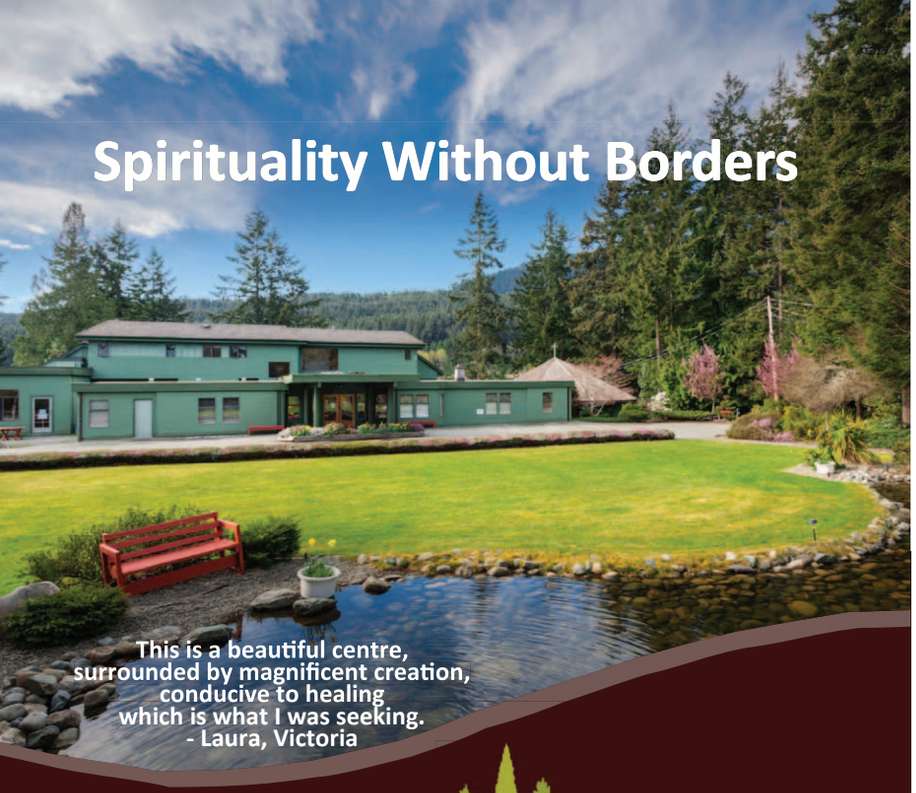
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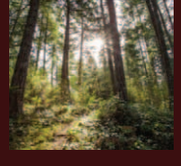
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2017 the political ecological awakening of BC

Trudeau's announcement to save the North Coast of BC and the simultaneously sacrifice the South Coast of BC to Alberta's petro tar sands industry is a prelude of big events to take place in the New Year. 2017 will be historic. This coming year will see a political ecological awakening in BC. Some BC historians will call our local Burnaby the "Standing Rock of the North."



Design: Kris Kozak
Photos: depositphotos.com

Macleans Magazine reported in 2012 "Chinese state interests went after two Calgary-based companies. China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) Ltd.'s $15.1-billion bid for Nexen Inc. got the most attention by far: it's the biggest-ever takeover of a Canadian company by a state-owned entity. On the same day, Talisman Energy Inc. said it would sell a 49 per cent stake in its U.K. North Sea outfit to Sinopec for $15 billion. "Virtually overnight, Chinese investment in the energy sector has doubled to over $30 billion," says Wenran Jiang, director of the Canada-China Energy & Environment Forum.

China wants to refine our oil, sell us Chinese steel made pipes, and use their labourers to build the pipeline.

ForestEthics Advocacy documents the massive foreign control of Alberta's tar sands oil industry. Publicly traded oil companies with active tar sands operations have a very high level of foreign ownership – 71 percent.

If Kinder Morgan decides to plow ahead and take the financial risk, well one thing is certain. Thousands will be arrested; Christy Clark will lose the BC election this May 9th over Kinder Morgan Pipeline issue. The BC courts will be processing pipeline arrestee's for the next three years. The BC NDP will certainly stop the Kinder Morgan pipeline, if elected.

Yes, 2017 will be a year for the history books. Whatever takes place, BC environmentalist must prepare for the battle ahead.

The way to stop Kinder Morgan from constructing this pipeline and terminal is with our bodies.

Again we must stand shoulder to shoulder and not allow this to happen. Thousands of British Columbia citizens of Canada have pledged to put their bodies in front of the bulldozers. The Union of BC Municipalities is against Kinder Morgan and many City Mayors have said they would stand with protesters. We invite you join this non-violent resistance to protect our land, air and water. Our future depends on it.

• Rod Marining, Co-Founder of Greenpeace Foundation and Greenpeace International, Now Chair of the BC Environmental Network www.bcen.info

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The faulty logic of Trudeau's Kinder Morgan Pipeline approval

Diluted bitumen unsafe in any waters and should be banned

by Merv Richie

For many years now the British Columbian population has endured news, commentaries and protests regarding the prospects of petroleum products being piped across the province and shipped by tankers from West Coast ports. Missing from the debate, including the recent decisions by the government of Justin Trudeau, is the various types of product and the present day dangers the coast faces now with all vessels.

The Nathan E. Stewart, which ran aground and sank at Bella Bella on October 13, 2016, highlights these dangers. Almost every vessel, from small fish boats to dry goods freighters has all their fuel uncontained. The MV Rena, which struck a reef and broke up spoiling the beaches of New Zealand five years ago, was a dry goods freighter. Everyday there are approximately 15 similar freighters moored in English Bay, each with an average of 3 million litres of Bunker Crude in their keel holds. Only 3/4 of an inch of steel separates the bunker fuel from the open ocean and our waterfront. A full 45 million litres or as much as the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska. All of this bunker crude and all fuel in almost all vessels waits to be spilled. The Nathan E. Stewart is our wake up call to demand fuel containment in all BC waters.

Most common of the refined petroleum products are diesel and gasoline. Besides the dozens of other products refined from crude oil the remaining sludge, a dirty sulphurous residue, is bunker crude. This is stored as ballast in the 'keel hold' at the bottom of all freighters. The consistency is such that it cannot be pumped without heating. When cold, it is like tar; in fact it is exactly the same substance we mix with gravel to pave our road surfaces. All freighters run on this filth after they leave populated harbours.

> When the Enbridge pipeline burst… the suddenly aerosolized poisons of the condensate created neurotoxins.

Bitumen, the product being extracted from the Northern Alberta and Saskatchewan Tar Sands operations, is similar to bunker crude. It also must be heated to be pumped. To make it flow in a pipeline a thinning agent is added. This is where the term Dil-Bit comes from; diluted bitumen. The thick bitumen is diluted with a product called 'condensate'. Condensate is a very toxic and explosive gas. It is a by-product of wet natural gas wells. Commonly called 'white gas' it contains hydrogen sulfide, methanol, ethynol, cyclohexane, naphthene, benzene, toluene, xylenes and ethyl benzene. This product is being imported into Canada by ship and by rail from Kitimat to Alberta for the present pipeline system.

Therefore, we have a variety of substances to consider along with the manner in which these substances are transported. Each has their own hazards and management issues.

When the Lac Megantic disaster happened, the tragic explosion of a runaway train carrying oil, the product was not just oil. It was a mixture of oil and gas. Most adults understand one cannot light a litre of 10W30 engine oil. But if one was to add a bit of gasoline to the bottle we would essentially be creating a bomb. One wouldn't want to stand too close when lighting it. That is exactly what was on the rails at Lac Megantic: bombs, crude oil mixed with gas.

What happened at Kalamazoo Michigan from the 'Dil-Bit' was a different result from the same mixture. When the Enbridge pipeline burst, a spray of pressurized 'Dil-Bit' hit the atmosphere. The local population suffered the effects of the toxicity. The suddenly aerosolized poisons of the condensate created neurotoxins.

Dil-Bit therefore is nothing short of an extremely explosive toxic nerve gas bomb.

Raw crude oil, without any added or present gases is difficult to transport by pipelines; for bitumen it is impossible. The added difficulty for Canadian bitumen is the corrosive sediment remaining after *continued p.18 ...*

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***Reference:** Anti-Influenza virus activities of commercial oregano oils and their carriers. Journal of Applied Pharmaceutical Science 2012; 02(07) 214-18.*



Billions wasted on cholesterol myth

It's time to move on

Though it may appear to my readers that I have cried wolf far too often on cholesterol-lowering drugs, I'm prepared to howl at the moon at least one more time. If you've read my columns over the last decade, you've seen me rant about the futility and absolute waste involved in our society's collective obsession with cholesterol and our foolishness in swallowing a paradigm promoted by the pharmaceutical industry and the specialists in their employ. The alleged benefits of lowering our cholesterol have never materialized and we have wasted tens of billions of dollars over the last two decades, deluded by a myth. It's time to drop that myth.

Ever since the early 1990s when the first cholesterol lowering drugs were being introduced to the market, no one had really ever heard of "high cholesterol" and certainly no one was going to their doctor just to get something checked that they never knew existed, that they couldn't feel and which was responsible for zero symptoms. Then along came the blockbuster statins and physicians followed guidelines that told them a patient's cholesterol level was an important risk factor for death by coronary heart disease (CHD). The hypothesis said that if you measured and lowered the cholesterol of patients deemed "high risk," those patients would live longer and avoid dying from heart attacks. So how's that working out?

Not so well, according to a study published in March of this year that probably delivered some of the boldest evidence yet and which should absolutely trash our enthusiasm for lowering our cholesterol. A European research team led by Dr. Federico Vancheri of Italy looked at statin consumption across 12 countries in western Europe between the years 2000 and 2012. During that time, the use of statins increased dramatically all across Europe – as well as in North America – yet his team wanted to know how this increase was reflected in the numbers of people who died of heart attacks. After all, with statins being used by tens of millions of patients, how many fewer heart attack deaths were there?

Here's the good news: in all countries over that 12 year period, there was lower CHD mortality in 2012 compared to 2000; that is to say, fewer deaths by heart attack. The drop in those numbers is thought to be attributed to a range of things: healthier diets, more exercise, lower rates of smoking, better treatment once you had established heart disease, and so on.

However, things didn't look so good when you looked at individual countries. The researchers found that "when the different countries were compared, there was no evidence that higher statin utilization was associated with lower CHD mortality, nor was there evidence that a high increase in statin utilization between 2000 and 2012 was related to a larger reduction in CHD mortality." In other words, despite all the statin prescribing, it had no effect on the one thing we expected to see: lower rates of heart attacks. This kind of research is not exactly new. There was an earlier Swedish study that showed the differences in a large sample of municipalities where the amount of statin prescribing had zero effect on the rate of heart attacks or CHD death.

Despite this kind of bad news for the statin manufacturers, the world is not exactly mourning the loss of a very costly – and now proven wastefully ineffective – pill. Just last month, many of us watched in horror as we witnessed a high-quality source of health information – the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) – come out with the astonishing recommendation that statins should be used by even more of us.

> Most of the trials on statins were done by the manufacturers and they have a tendency to bury negative data.

In their analysis, the USPSTF amassed a massive amount of data from over 70,000 patients from 19 different trials. They wrote that low-to-moderate-dose statins should be given to "adults aged 40 to 75 years without a history of cardiovascular disease (CVD), who have one or more CVD risk factors and a calculated 10-year CVD event risk of 10% or greater." Practically speaking, this means tens of millions more Americans were offered statins.

Sounds good, right? Not so fast. Remember, the people they are recommending take statins are basically healthy, middle-aged people, folks with no established heart disease, 90% of whom will live perfectly happily without a heart attack or stroke over the next 10 years. These are NOT sick people perched on death's doorstep.

So, what's up? It always surprises me when an otherwise reputable and trustworthy source gives absurd advice, especially given all the statin scandals and shenanigans we've seen over the last two decades.

In case you don't believe me, here are some key reasons we should ignore the advice to give more statins to more people, as the task force recommended. I must acknowledge Drs. Rita Redberg and Mitchell Katz who wrote a scintillating editorial on this USPSTF recommendation and whose arguments I am partially summarizing here.

The first thing to know is that the body of studies examined by the USPSTF is tainted, as it included many people taking statins for 'secondary' prevention – for example, people with established heart disease and hence considered at much higher risk. You cannot extrapolate how they fared on statins to healthier people without established heart disease.

The second thing is that the evidence they looked at didn't contain the kind of detail we need. The USPSTF didn't examine what we call primary data, which are the actual reports from the subjects in the statin trials. Without actual patient reports, we're only getting the results of what someone has chosen to summarize for us. Sorry, that isn't good enough. Also, if you only examined the published reports of statins, you are being naive because we know that most of the trials on statins were done by the manufacturers and they have a tendency to bury negative data. The result? An overly rosy picture of the effects of statins.

Thirdly, there was a major bit of missing information in those data, specifically what we call "all-cause mortality." Only half of the trials they looked at reported how many patients died from cardiovascular causes, heart attacks and strokes. The problem with missing data is you are only getting half the picture so you end up concluding the drugs are safer than they actually are. You wouldn't conclude how rich you are by only looking at your assets, would you? No, of course not. You need to know your liabilities and debts as well. Same with statins. Without both sides of the equation, you are at risk of being misled.

We need to remind ourselves of one key thing: people of 'low risk' may have very little chance of benefiting from a statin, but will have an equal chance of harm. In this group of healthy, low-risk people recommended to take statins, the benefit/harm math shifts and they are more likely to be hurt than helped.

Overall, the danger of recommendations like these is that more people will be convinced they are at high risk when they aren't and take a drug that is unlikely to help because it is only proven to help those with established heart disease. We have known for a long time that statins can cause muscle aches, weakness, fatigue, cognitive dysfunction and an increased risk of diabetes. Why would you want to take your chances?

Maybe all the statin denialism is just part of the post-truth world and people tend to believe what they want to believe despite the overwhelming evidence in the other direction. Are you a 'low-risk' person who still wants to take a statin? Then you should have to pay for your denialism.

Statins are currently the fourth most costly drug to BC's Pharmacare budget, and with over 400,000 British Columbians consuming statins every day, costing taxpayers and patients about $100 million per year, couldn't we just admit the experiment is over, it was a failure and it's time to move on?

Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher and writer. In each of his past four books, the latest which is called **The Cochrane Collaboration: Medicine's Best Kept Secret,** he has written about statins. Follow him on twitter @AkeCassels

by Tim Richter and Ryan Meili

Housing crisis a public health emergency

One of the biggest factors that determine whether people will stay healthy or wind up needing emergency or chronic medical care is where they live. People without access to stable housing are at higher risk of illness, and their likelihood of recovering well from that illness is greatly diminished.

How bad is Canada's housing crisis? According to the newly released National Shelter Study, Canada's emergency shelters are packed to the rafters. People are languishing in homelessness longer, and their ranks increasingly include seniors, veterans and families with children. Shamefully, Indigenous Canadians are over 10 times more likely than non-Indigenous people to end up in emergency shelter.

Some physicians have gone so far as to label homelessness a palliative diagnosis. Not having a home can be lethal.

This report paints only a partial picture of homelessness in Canada, including only emergency shelters. The sad reality is that over 35,000 Canadians are homeless on a given night with more than 235,000 Canadians experiencing homelessness at some point every year, whether they sleep in shelters, on the street, couch surf, wait unnecessarily in hospital or other temporary accommodation.

Beyond a crisis of housing and poverty, homelessness is a public health emergency. The longer people are homeless, the worse their health becomes. A recent report from British Columbia suggests life expectancy for people experiencing homelessness in that province is half that of other British Columbians.

Some physicians have gone so far as to label homelessness a palliative diagnosis. Not having a home can be lethal. Homelessness causes premature death, poor health and is a significant burden on our health care system.

Today, more than 1.5 million Canadian households live in core housing need, with over half of those households living in extreme core housing need (living in poverty and spending over 50 percent of their income on housing).

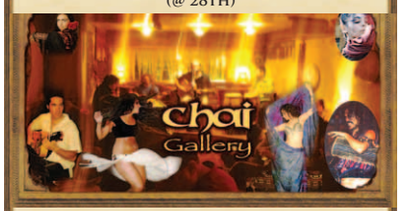
The crisis stands to get worse before it gets better as federal operating agreements for older social housing expire and over 300,000 more households risk losing the subsidies that keep their housing affordable.

In the last 20 years, as Canada's population has grown, federal funding for affordable housing has dropped more than 46 percent. This has meant at least 100,000 units of affordable housing were not built. Canada's homelessness crisis is the direct result of this federal withdrawal from housing investment. The new federal government has promised a National Housing Strategy, and has begun consultations.

The most pressing problem – finding stable housing for those who are currently homeless or at risk for homelessness – is one that, fortunately, can be solved. We need to start by collecting real-time, person-specific data on homelessness and expanding the application of the Housing First model of supportive housing for individuals with greater challenges. Housing First (www.homelesshub.ca) is an evidence-based approach to ending homelessness that provides direct access to permanent housing and support.

Tim Richter is the president and CEO of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (www.caeh.ca), a national movement of individuals, organizations and communities working together to end homelessness in Canada. Ryan Meili is a Family Physician in Saskatoon, an expert advisor with Evidence Network and founder of Upstream.

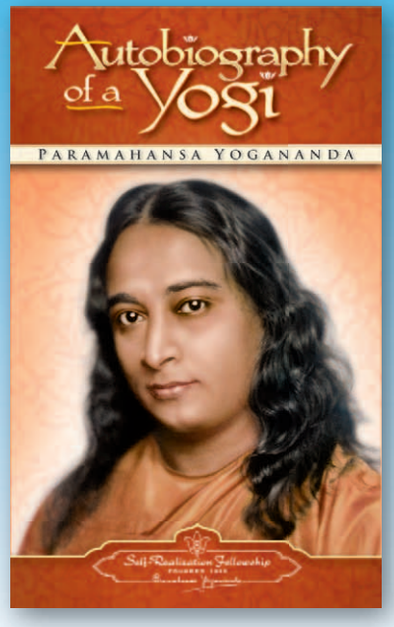
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Optimal winter health

Iron, zinc and vitamin C are key to a healthy immune system that will ward off cold and flu viruses.

photo ©Teresa Kasprzycka

Winter's short days can make us feel lethargic and a little depressed; the long hours spent indoors hibernating on the couch can have a major impact on our overall wellbeing. To avoid the effects of old man winter, fight your hibernating instincts by embracing the season, while taking the necessary precautions to be healthy. To help you get there, the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) has these five tips for natural winter wellness.

Opt for healthy comfort food

In winter, we crave simple carbs because they are rich in tryptophan, causing our feel-good hormones such as serotonin and dopamine to temporarily increase. These foods, which are typically refined and have little nutritional value, cause a quick increase in our blood sugar followed by a quick decrease causing us to crave more. To avoid this vicious cycle while satisfying your cravings, opt for more complex carbs including oatmeal, legumes, soups and stews.

Shake it up and sleep it off

When it comes to exercise, don't let winter be an excuse. Develop a well-rounded fitness routine that includes cardio and strength training. Also, give yourself plenty of rest time. Restful slumber helps fight depression and eliminates extra amounts of the stress hormone cortisol. Adequate amounts of exercise and sleep should be non-negotiable in maintaining a healthy lifestyle this winter.

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Dose up on vitamins and minerals

Iron, zinc and vitamin C are key to a healthy immune system that will ward off cold and flu viruses. Foods rich in these nutrients include dark, leafy greens, red and yellow fruits and vegetables, lean red meats and pumpkin seeds. Taking a daily multivitamin is a great insurance policy to ensure you are getting your required daily intake of essential minerals and vitamins.

Go for garlic

The sulfur-containing compounds in garlic help increase the potency of two important cells of the immune system: T-lymphocytes and macrophages. These are essential to help battle the flu and colds. Opt for odourless capsules if you want to avoid the strong taste of garlic.

Use coconut oil

As the temperature continues to drop, you have probably noticed the negative effects on your skin as it becomes dry, flaky and itchy. Walking down the aisles of the store, it's quickly apparent that the choices of lotions and potions to stop dry skin are endless, but which product should you choose? There's one superfood solution that is inexpensive, works wonders, and will perhaps make you think you're on a tropical island: coconut oil is the perfect product to help ward off the attacks of Canada's harsh winters. "Coconut oil has increasingly gained popularity in Canada, and for good reasons. Its multiple uses are impressive, but most importantly, it is a truly remarkable skincare product," says Helen Long, president of the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA). "It is a known fact that winter can wreak havoc on the skin. Adding coconut oil to your skincare routine is a particularly good way of protecting yourself against the damages of bitterly cold winds and dry indoor conditions."

Coconut oil is rich in medium-chain fatty acids, which allows it to retain the moisture content of the skin while helping it to look and feel silky smooth. It also has high quantities of vitamin E, an essential nutrient for healthy skin growth, repair and the prevention of premature aging. Coconut oil is also rich in many proteins that contribute to cellular health and tissue repair. CHFA recommends that you winter-proof your skin with coconut oil by using it in the following ways:

Moisturizer: simply rub a small amount of coconut oil wherever you have dry or cracked skin. Your skin will absorb the oil quickly, plus it smells wonderful.

Exfoliant: making your own natural exfoliant by mixing coconut oil with natural exfoliating substances like sea salt or sugar is a great way to remove dead cells that accumulate on your skin throughout the winter.

Lip balm: applying chemical products on your lips is a sure way to ingest potentially harmful substances. Substitute your chemical lip balm for coconut oil and keep your lips moist and protected throughout the winter.

Source: **Canadian Health Food Association** The Canadian Health Food Association is Canada's largest trade association dedicated to natural health and organic products. Its members include manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers, distributors and importers of natural and organic products. chfa.ca

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Oxford Dictionaries

WORD OF THE YEAR

Post-truth

by Bruce Mason

We should be truly grateful for the freebie gift of "post-truth," handed to us by Oxford Dictionaries as their choice for Word of the Year in summing up 2016.

As in 'post-truth politics,' the adjective relates to "when objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion." Pretty much wraps up contemporary reality, perfectly. Nine letters and a hyphen to help us address and understand our common global Frequently Asked Question (FAQ): "What's happening?" Post-truth provides a handle on what's ahead – a ready-made resolution for 2017.

Humanity, divided and falling, is being conquered by post-truth. The dark-art master is president-elect of the self-destructing super-power south of our border. For example, there is widespread belief in the US that millions of voters cast ballots illegally. However it has been determined in post-election studies there were four such documented incidents, or 0.000002 percent of the tally. When confronted with the facts of voter fraud, Trump spokesperson Kellyanne Conway responded that Trump was "messaging to his supporters and to the rest of the country the way he feels." But it's also practised and perfected by our prime minister and premier, the 'princess' of post-truth. They fiddle around the edges of existential crises while preaching nonsensical rubbish about fossil fuels, oil spill recovery, Reconciliation, 'Real Change' and the like, as if they are actually doing something constructive in our collective downward spiral.

Jon Stewart popularized p-t, and Stephen Colbert's "truthiness" has the same quality: seeming, or being felt to be true, but not necessarily so. Casper Grathwohl, head of Oxford Dictionaries, won't be surprised if post-truth becomes the "defining word of our time."

Justin Trudeau vows to price carbon emissions – by 2018 – to "show leadership that, quite frankly, the entire world is looking for." Undeterred by an assertion that climate change is a "hoax," he congratulated Donald J. Trump: "Our shared values are strong. Our common purpose, to build countries where everyone has a fair chance to succeed, and where government works first, foremost and always, for the people it serves. The Canadian government will continue its hard work toward these ends,



and we offer our hand in partnership with our neighbours as friends and allies." A post-truth mural, and masterpiece.

Truth is we can't expand tar sands AND keep our promised climate targets, clean oil spills, honour First Nations, or find the will to get on with what is urgently required. Trudeau, initially perceived as an 'anti-Trump," now provides fuel and pipes for a climate bomb that The Donald is fusing with mega-tons of infantile denial and ignorance of reality.

From 2013 to 2015, Canada's government granted $3.3billion in subsidies for fossil fuel extraction incentives and research and development (R&D), essentially paying polluters $19 for each tonne of carbon dioxide emitted. Critics liken it to taxing cigarettes with one hand while giving breaks to tobacco companies on the other. Three+billion could jump-start renewables to catch up with the rest of the world (ROTW). However, in fairness, the rest of the world also supports

> Post-truth encompasses fake news, awash on the Internet and in corporate media, the numerous stories and issues ignored, politics, packaged as a game, and elections, as a half-time show.

fossil fuel, to the tune of $5.3trillion a year, equivalent to $10m a minute, every day, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). That's more than the world spends on health, including subsidies and support, as well as on pollution and the costs associated with extreme weather.

But, as the *Guardian* asked on October 29, "Think Canada is a progressive paradise? That's Mooseshit! We broker deals for an obscene number of weapons, and we frequently run roughshod over the rights of indigenous people. And don't even get us started on your favourite

scarey clown by Thom Voidh

wonderboy, Justin Trudeau."

The byline is Jesse Brown, co-author of Canadaland (Touchstone), who adds, "Despite Trudeau's progressive branding, Canada is right where Stephen Harper left us. A year since the election, we're still selling arms to Saudi Arabia, still cutting $36bn from healthcare and still basing our economy on fossil fuel extraction, running roughshod over indigenous rights... while backtracking on a campaign promise for electoral reform."

"Decision-based evidence-making, to maintain the status quo, not 'evidence-based decision making' promised in the election," says NDP MP Nathan Cullen, a member of the electoral reform committee, charged with finding an alternative to ("the last") first-past-the-post.

Meanwhile, too few Canadians are aware of our shiny, new privatization bank. "Unprecedented," enthuses Canada's top business lobbyist, *continued pg 23 ...*

Post-truth in pictures

In our highly digitized, post-truth world, the ancient sage Confucius would undoubtedly revise the maxim, "One picture is worth a thousand words" to "millions of words."

Picture this: The Donald screaming at photographers to turn around and click on crowds at rallies. Or selfie-king Justin Trudeau, sometimes shirtless, sometimes dressed to the hilt (*Vogue* magazine), inside Buckingham Palace, or backstage hugging the Tragically Hip's Gord Downie, or in other venues where press photojournalists have limited or no access. Justin, it appears, won't step foot outside 24 Sussex Drive without cameras or audio on-hand. And then there's the flood of old-fashioned press releases, massaged and spun to near-death in today's Newspeak.

Not to be outdone, Christy Clark, coined "Premier photo-op" by the NDP opposition, has adjusted the focus for the upcoming election (May 7, 2017). Since cancelling the fall session of the legislature, she has mimicked the endless US-style election cycle in highly flattering and proliferating "government" ads. Now she's hired three-time photojournalist winner of the year, John Lehmann, away from the *Globe and Mail*. He will document her black-top electioneering, with his fee picked up by the Party. Good job the BC Liberals have a multi-million-dollar war chest.

That investment is already paying off in spades in a crop of new pics. Access and angle are everything in picture storytelling and, in the past, Christie has been justifiably ridiculed for photos of herself in hard-hats and saris, draped in Aboriginal art, or scarily propped up behind podiums and in front of larger-than-life slogans. She already has three video camera persons at her disposal, but in Lehmann's camera-and-consumer-ready work, it looks as if our Prem has had a world-class makeover, no longer appearing so divisive, strident and clichéd.

Not to worry about words, though. Her government communications army now numbers more than 200, 10 times the number of reporters in BC's press gallery. Post-journo candidates for BC Libs include former BCTV morning man, Steve Darling and LNG front-man, Jas Johal.

The duo may or may not earn their stripes to lurk in Victoria hallways. But Lehmann will still have lots of company in leg cafeterias and watering holes. Stephen Smart (CBC, CTV and CKNW) is Clark's press secretary. Ben Chin, (CBC, CTV and City TV) is communications director. Sean Leslie ('NW legislature bureau chief) landed a senior communications gig in Social Development. Scott Sutherland (Canadian Press), Graham Currie (CKNW), Jeff Rud (Times-Colonist) and Brennan Clarke (Black Press) are all on the government/taxpayer payroll. And, of course, Clark's pal Pamela Martin (BCTV) is BC Liberals' director of engagement.

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Mac McLaughlin

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December 2016
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ALEXANDER the Great consulted his astrologers as to how long he would live. His chief astrologer told him that when the sky turns to gold and the Earth turns to iron is when he would die. Hearing that, Alexander was pleased and nearly thought himself immortal. He figured it would be a long time before the sky turned to gold and the Earth to iron. So the story goes... he was journeying across the desert and became very ill. One of his men took off his chainmail vest and laid it on the ground for Alexander to lie on. Another guard held up a golden umbrella to shield him from the burning sun. When Alexander realized that the Earth beneath him had turned to iron and the sky above had turned to gold, he lamented regarding his foolishness for believing in his astrologer's prediction. In today's world, astrology has many branches and many uses, but, in the end run, it really is about trying to get a handle on what's coming up the road. The world seems to be spinning a bit faster and many people are in a spin regarding the consequences of President elect Donald Trump at the helm of the good ole U.S. of A. Well, I think we need some predictions so here we go:

In my mind, it is profound and astounding that, according to Vedic astrology, which has been around for at least several thousand years, the US is in the double cycle of Rahu until 2018. The US started off as a nation in the Rahu cycle. Rahu and Ketu are shadow planets, basically points on the ecliptic where eclipses take place. It is well known in astrological circles that eclipses are very associated with personal and collective karma. Interestingly and fatefully, the US manifests Trump born on a lunar eclipse, with Rahu in a most powerful position. If there is, or ever was, a figure to represent Rahu it would be Trump. Rahu is known to be insatiable, one who can never be satisfied, no matter what he has or what he attains. Now, as the fates would have it, a solar eclipse takes place on August 21, 2017, practically right on Trump's ascendant, and very close to Mars in his chart. This configuration would get any self-respecting astrologer to sit up and take notice. But there's more, much more.

Within the next several days following the eclipse, Mars transits over Trump's Mars while retrograde Mercury practically stations right on the eclipse degree. This tells us that something big is in the wind and will manifest at this time. At the same time, Saturn comes along and is basically stopped right on Trump's Moon opposite his Sun and opposite to Pence's Mercury and the US' Mars.

Well, that was a real mouthful, but what it means is that whatever is going to befall Trump and the fate of the US will happen in August-September of 2017. You name it and it could take place. Impeachment is highly likely with Saturn the lawgiver very much in the play. Outright violence is a high probability with assassination attempts certainly possible. Let us pray that peace prevails and people keep their wits about them. By the way, Mars in Trump's chart is not only rising, which gives it great power and status, but it is considered to be Raja yoga-karaka. Raja means King, yoga means union and karaka means indicator – indicator of a King or one who wields great power. So, as you can see, the seas are churned up and destiny and fate are in motion. The American Indian word, hanta yo, comes to mind, which means "clear the way." I know this column is dramatic, but whatever is destined to be will be. Our work is to be the best that we can be, and the best bet is to strive to love one another now. There are some long, very positive planetary cycles coming up in the future that will give mankind a big boost. The true Godman Param Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj has told us he has seen the golden rays of the coming Golden Age. Our hearts are hardened and we are in a time of great consternation and confusion. The time has come to love and only love.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109.

ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19
Dare to dream; even better, make your dreams a reality. Jupiter in Libra opposes Uranus in Aries for the next three months. Jupiter rules good fortune and good timing. Uranus is the planet of revolutionary thinking. Think out of the box, think big, and then make some moves. Throw caution to the wind and damn the torpedoes.

TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21
Your solar tenth house of career objectives is lit up like a Christmas tree throughout December. It means that you're hot and probably in good position for a move up the ladder. January is dynamic as well with strong indications of increased connectedness and expansion within your circle of friends and colleagues.

GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20
There are two distinct planetary patterns unfolding in December and January. During December, you may feel held back as the Sun and Saturn cast their energies into your sign. Best advice? Go slow and see what comes in the New Year. January is a lot more positive, and there are indications of lucky breaks, especially career-wise.

CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22
Organize, plan, and reorganize, and possibly regroup and re-plan. I know it sounds crazy and silly, but this is the type of energy on-board, especially in December. Lots of movement is indicated, with possible travel more likely in January. Take care of any health issues, and stay open and willing to make changes where necessary.

LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22
The December skies are very much in your favour. January too. It doesn't mean it's all a cakewalk. The gist of the energy on-board is that you can work through practically anything that comes your way. Innovation and planning are key factors. Sort out any lagging concerns so you can move forward with ease.

VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22
December appears to be a bit rocky. You may have to rewrite the plan as you near the end of the month. Blockages, stoppages and other types of concerns seem to get in the way. January is a totally different story. High energy, action and movement take place. It looks like that rewrite did the trick.

LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22
A high energy time takes place over the next few months. Jupiter, the planet of good fortune and good timing, is moving through Libra. It means this is a significant time of changes for you. Make the best of this opportune time by reaching for what you truly want to do.

SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21
Your mind might be on topics such as resources and real estate, especially in December. It's probably not the best time to purchase, but you sure can make plans. A renovation or move is possibly in store. Come January, your attention may be focused on family. Children, entertainment and romance could be big features at this time.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21
The Sun and Saturn meet up in Sagittarius on December 10 and your mood may be more on the solemn side. You may be in the midst of making important decisions regarding family, career and finances. Lord Jupiter throws in some very good energy brightening the days as you move through January.

CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19
Throw it to your drummer. This little expression is something we hippy kids put together when we were troubled and had no answers. Your drummer is your subconscious. Mercury goes retrograde on December 19 and he's conjunct Pluto. It's time to go deep. The wisdom and answers you seek will probably show up at the time of the full Moon on January 12.

AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19
Venus and Mars travel through Aquarius in December bringing a highly creative and possibly romantic time your way. Jupiter, the great benefactor, also casts fine energy bringing opportunities for travel and spiritual upliftment. January also looks to be promising and exciting. You're on the move.

PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20
The Sun and Saturn move across the top of your solar chart in December indicating a time of acknowledgement and fulfillment, or a time when you might want to move on to greener pastures. January may prove to be highly positive as Mars and Venus visit Pisces bringing excitement, challenge and possible romantic attraction.



Leaving a bad relationship

Sometimes, it's better to end something and try to start something new than imprison yourself in hoping for the impossible. – Karen Salmansohn

Over the years, I have worked with many women in bad relationships. Often, the previous relationship was bad too and it took her a long time to leave. I am not talking about relationships that have their struggles but are still okay; I am referring to ones in which the woman is disrespected and emotionally or physically abused. It seems women can more easily leave a physically abusive relationship. What makes them stay? Often, they may not have felt loved and secure in childhood and are not used to being valued. They may have low self-esteem and when criticized or put down, they second-guess themselves into thinking maybe he's right. They may not truly love themselves and only feel valued when someone likes or loves them.

> Women must learn to love and honour themselves – to neither be abusive nor allow themselves to be abused.

This can lay the groundwork for a Cinderella story. She meets someone and falls in love. The feeling of being in love is so powerful it blinds her to any character flaws. He is in love with her too, so wants to impress her. He wants to show he is way better than her last partner. Both put their best foot forward. It is perfect or almost perfect.

He feels like her prince and she his princess. They share visions of living happily ever after. This feeling is intoxicating, an emotional high.

Over time, they both begin to fall off of their pedestals. They start seeing things they do not like. When they try to talk about it, they fight. The coach is slowly transforming into a pumpkin.

They are now coming down from the high they shared in the beginning. They see that the other is not all he/she seemed in the beginning. They trigger more negative behaviours in each other and they both feel they were duped. They are angry that the wonderful loving feeling they had before is now elusive. They take out their anger and disappointment on each other.

Their behaviour continues to deteriorate and now the relationship is more about struggle than about joy. A guy may simply walk away or he may begin to attack and denigrate her. A strong woman will take herself out of the situation once the behaviour becomes abusive.

A less confident woman, or one who needs to feel loved to be whole, will try to "fix" the relationship even though the partner continues to berate her and blame her for everything. She will try to reason with him, defend herself or just keep quiet so as not to anger him. Slowly, she loses herself, often becoming very depressed.

Even if they break up or she knows she should leave, she continues holding on, looking for that little sign of the love she once thought was there. She does not want to let go just in case the pumpkin turns back into a coach.

It never was a coach. It was a pumpkin all along. Sure, in all relationships, the romance can become less intense, but in good ones, even when the flames turn into embers, they still provide light, warmth and comfort.

Women must learn to love and honour themselves – to neither be abusive nor allow themselves to be abused. We tell children to stay away from bullies. As adults, we must have the strength and courage to do that too.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, "Deep Powerful Change" hypnosis CDs and "Creating Effective Relationships" series, visit www.gwen.ca and "Like" Gwen on Facebook.

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Hard work and love trump fear and hate

Now what? Many people in the United States and around the world are dismayed that a bigoted, misogynistic, climate change denier has been elected to the highest office in what is still the world's most powerful nation. His party controls the House and Senate, meaning pro-fossil-fuel, anti-climate-action representatives who reject overwhelming and alarming scientific evidence will hold the reins. It will be a government firmly in the pocket of the fossil fuel industry. But global warming isn't going to pause for four years. It's going to accelerate. Do we give up?

No way! Governments move slowly at the best of times. People were filled with hope when Barack Obama became America's first black president. Sure, there was progress in some areas, but the fossil fuel industry continued to expand as the world got warmer. Here in Canada, after a decade of watching our political representatives backtrack on environmental and climate policies, Canadians elected a party that promised climate leadership. Despite many progressive and positive initiatives, our government is still encouraging, subsidizing and approving fossil fuel projects and infrastructure.

We can't count on governments to make the changes we so desperately need. It's up to us. We must be the change. We have our work cut out for us, but work we must. Perhaps this is even an opportunity, albeit one fraught with great challenges. The election exposed nasty currents in US society, but it also revealed a profound and rising dissatisfaction with the status quo.

The answer isn't to throw more gas on the fire. Many Americans just did that. Now, it's up to those of us who believe in a brighter future to bring the fire under control without killing the flame. On the day after the election, the David Suzuki Foundation's Alaya Boisvert posted, "Let the fire that ignites from this madness outshine the darkness that precipitated it."

We can't be complacent. We can't let fear and despair stop us from working to make the world a better place for everyone, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, physical appearance or limitations, country of origin, political leanings, education or social circumstance. And let's face it, the planet isn't in trouble, humanity is. Earth's natural systems always find balance, but the corrections they make to overcome the damage we've caused… don't favour our species and the path we're on.

We can't count on governments to make the changes we so desperately need. It's up to us. We have our work cut out for us, but work we must.

We have so many possibilities and so much potential. We have knowledge and amazing technologies. We have ancient wisdom that teaches us how to be a part of this miraculous, complex, interconnected existence. Most of us want the same things: health, happiness and connection with others.

We mustn't let fear overcome us. It's time to stand together to work for justice and human rights, for equity, for liberty, for a cleaner environment, for governments that serve the people rather than corporations – for the values the United States of America was supposedly founded on. We must listen to each other and promote dialogue rather than debate.

The US election has brought things to a head, and the boil is erupting. It's more important now than ever before to come together to heal the wound.

David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation Senior Editor Ian Hanington. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org







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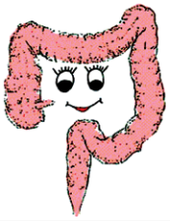


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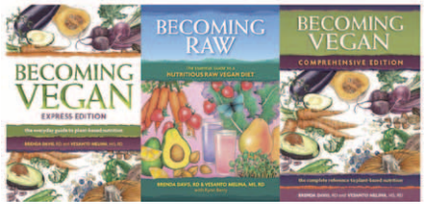
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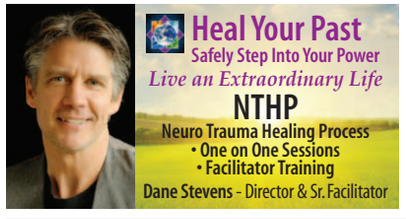


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It is a lack of confidence more than anything else that kills a civilization. We can destroy ourselves by cynicism and disillusion just as effectively as by bombs.
– Kenneth Clark

...***Dil-Bit*** *from pg. 5*

initial processing. The life of the pipelines is substantially reduced due to increased wear, much like sandpaper, the bitumen presents.

Transporting bitumen by rail car is not dangerous as long as it is not diluted or heated; shipped cold and raw. Bunker crude is shipped this way today. A derailment would see the product simply stay where it spilled even if a rail car broke open. A fully refined product, Dil-Bit or condensate would pollute flowing freely, vaporize or even ignite.

All these products are loaded onto vessels plying our waters completely un-contained. The rail cars or pipelines fill storage tanks next to the waters or are emptied directly into the vessel at port. This in itself presents a variety of potential for spillage. At Kitimat the condensate is reportedly spilled regularly. Tank farms are known to spring leaks including the one Kinder Morgan operates at Burrard Inlet, and spills occur while filling vessels. In fact most pleasure craft and fishing vessels are filled until the overflow spills out into the waters. All of these hazards and spillages could be resolved by a demand for containment by our governments.

In 1965 Ralph Nader wrote *Unsafe at Any Speed*. It was a critical examination of the Automobile Industry's refusal to consider adding safety features such as seat belts. The industry, Nader detailed, sacrificed the lives of thousands by their combined refusal to address the very real and obvious hazards. A clear analogy is obvious here. The automobile industry complained loudly against regulation of their product, arguing the extra costs would bankrupt them or make their product unaffordable. Now safety is one of the auto industries greatest advertising features, adding airbags and protection devices wherever possible.

The petroleum and marine shipping industry could achieve the same result. Just as was required for the auto industry, regulations and changes will need to be enforced.

All vessels must be required to be retrofitted to have their fuel stored in removable containers. In the case of freighters, the rail cars presently delivering bunker crude could be redesigned to be detached from the rail bed, just as containers are today. These could then be lowered into refabricated holds on the vessel. A Panamax freighter would likely require 30 of these removable tank cars. Each could be connected to the fuel system by an electrically operated solenoid valve such that in the case of loss of power or impending disaster, the valves would secure the fuel. The very same fuel containment system must be made mandatory on all vessels. Sealed, removable fuel modules.

Just like a family going out for boating trip on a boat with a small outboard motor, the fuel is generally carried on board in a specially designed fuel tank. The hose is connected and with a couple squeezes on the fuel ball, the motor is ready to start.

Presently most vessels are unsafe in any waters. While there is justifiable outrage at Prime Minister Trudeau's approval of the Kinder Morgan expansion plans, there is the opportunity to address the dangers present today.

If we demanded an immediate change to all fuel containment systems having bunker fuel and crude or bitumen transported cold and raw in detachable rail cars, sealed from the point of production to the destination, loaded in the same manner as 'Sea Can' containers are today, the dangers would be greatly reduced. An added benefit would be the reduced need for importing condensate to make toxic nerve gas and bombs. Dil-Bit needs to be completely banned.

The Nathan E. Stewart was a wakeup call, as is the still-leaking Queen of the North; and the MV Bovec balancing on a reef off Prince Rupert in 2000 is similar to the MV Rena in New Zealand. British Columbia is just lucky to not have a disaster on its shores. And this is long before more tanker traffic arrives.

Leonard Cohen (1934-2016)

A triumphant soundtrack for our times

by Bruce Mason



Just before the profoundly sad news of his death went viral in November, many were listening to Leonard Cohen's latest recording, *You Want It Darker* (released October, 2016), eerily prophetic and highly acclaimed as among the best of his 14 albums. As the world became darker and more inexplicable and absurd, the numbers grew into the millions, as others reached out and briefly retreated into his beloved canon of musical meditations on 'big questions.'

My own initiation began with a few dollars left over from purchasing first-year university textbooks, spent on *Let Us Compare Mythologies* (1956), published when Cohen himself was an undergraduate. Its intellectual and spiritual hunger, melancholy and black humour were the most easily understood and accessible in the campus bookstore. Through dog-eared and thumb-worn poetry collections – *The Spice-Box of Earth*, *Flowers for Hitler, Parasites of Heaven* – and novels – *The Favourite Game* and *Beautiful Losers* – I followed along on his quest for what he called a "state of grace, a kind of balance in the chaos of existence."

In an engrossing *New Yorker* profile in October, "confined to barracks" from a modest second floor in L.A., Cohen confessed in his final interview, "I've got some work to do. Take care of business. I am ready to die. I hope it's not too uncomfortable. That's about it for me."

For the greater part of 82 years, Leonard Cohen wrote, recorded and performed a sometimes bleak, sometimes joyful, soundtrack of our times. Even from his deathbed. A handful of informal guitar lessons in his twenties served him well: "Six chords and a guitar pattern, that has been the basis of all my songs and all my music," he said. And he eventually tamed his performance anxiety after pursuing Zen as a discipline and a practice of investigation.

Five decades ago, Cohen was as big and celebrated as it got in Can-Lit and culture. He befriended fellow poet Irving Layton, later recalling, "I taught him how to dress; he taught me how to live forever." In 1960, restless and relentless, he retreated to the Greek island of Hydra where cars were banned and mules carried water up steep paths to houses. With a small inheritance, he purchased a simple, whitewashed space for $1,500 and shared it with one of his many muses, Marianne Ihlen, and her young son.

> He was an original voice, haunting, hypnotic, a whisper-like rasp, unconventional, unprecedented...

"I met him in the mid-'60s," Judy Collins told me (*Both Sides Now*, *Common Ground*, April, *continued pg 22 ...*



photo by Takahiro Kyono Creative Commons

Last words from Leonard

Twenty-five years ago, his song, *The Future*, prophesied, "And now the wheels of heaven stop. You feel the devil's riding crop. Get ready for the future: it is murder." Weeks before his death, he shared some insights:

"I know there's a spiritual aspect to everybody's life, whether they want to cop to it or not. It's there, you can feel it in people – there's some recognition that there is a reality that they cannot penetrate but which influences their mood and activity. So that's operating. That activity at certain points of your day or night insists on a certain kind of response. Sometimes it's just like, 'You are losing too much weight, Leonard. You're dying, but you don't have to cooperate enthusiastically with the process. Force yourself to have a sandwich.'

"What I mean to say is that you hear the Bat Kol. The divine voice. You hear this other deep reality singing to you all the time, and much of the time you can't decipher it. Even when I was healthy, I was sensitive to the process. At this stage of the game, I hear it saying, 'Leonard, just get on with the things you have to do.' It's very compassionate at this stage. More than at any time of my life, I no longer have that voice that says, 'You're fucking up.' That's a tremendous blessing, really."

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Krishnamurti Vancouver Group @ Vancouver Public Library, Board Breakout Room, 350 W. Georgia St. 1-5PM. Free video showing & dialogue! www.meetup.com/Krishnamurti-Vancouver-Group

DEC 13
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Vancouver: Free Workshop "Having Spiritual Goals," Theory / Practice of Inner Light Meditation. 6-8:30PM, Science of Spirituality. Registration / Information – Linda: 604-985-5840.

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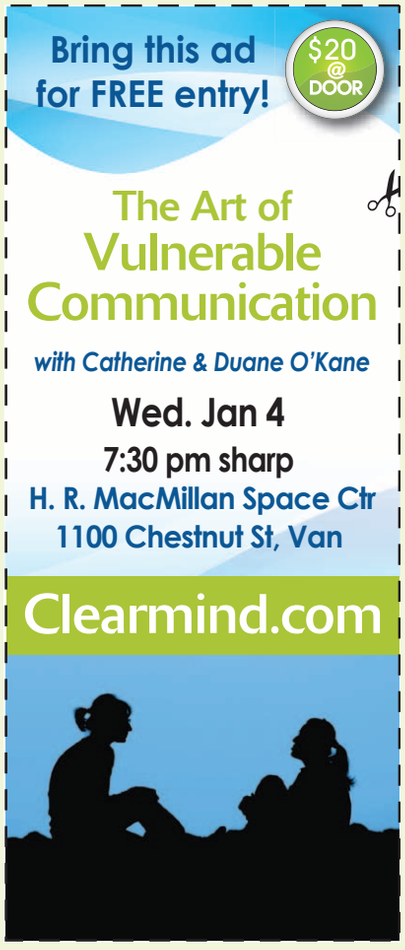
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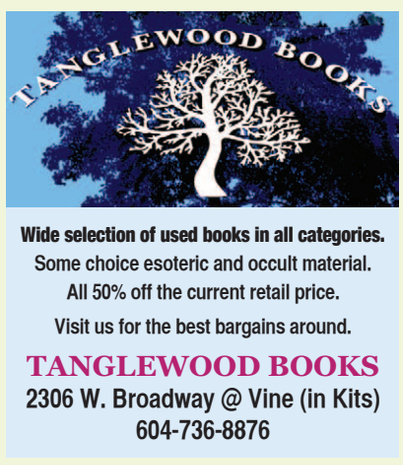
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Canada and mass surveillance

Trump's election should prompt Canada to rethink its complicity in US spy activities

President-elect Donald Trump. It's still a phrase that takes some getting used to. Trump's pronouncements on issues of online privacy, surveillance and net neutrality – among many other topics – should send a shiver down the spine of anyone who cares about preserving basic democratic freedoms in a digital age.

For Canadians, these concerns strike particularly close to home. Already, federal government ministers are grappling with the implications of the impending Trump presidency, and for Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale and Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, these implications are especially profound.

For many years, Canada's spy agencies have worked extremely closely with their US counterparts, not least as part of the decades-old "Five Eyes" surveillance alliance between the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. This cooperation is so tight that, over the years the Five Eyes have evolved into what whistleblower Edward Snowden describes as "a supranational intelligence organization that doesn't answer to the laws of its own countries."

Reread that last sentence and juxtapose it with the words "President-elect Donald Trump" – it should be clear to all Canadians that it's not just our southern neighbours who have a huge problem on their hands.

We have only to look to Trump's own words to gauge the likely trajectory of his presidency and its impacts on our freedoms. Trump's public statements reveal a man who advocates torture, who muses about using presidential powers to punish his political enemies, who proposes a dramatic expansion of surveillance powers, and who wants to unleash his security forces on peaceful groups such as Black Lives Matter.

It's not just our southern neighbours who have a huge problem on their hands.

No matter what your political stripes, we should fear the consequences of his approach. We know all too well from cases such as that of Maher Arar that terrible human consequences flow from handing over the private information of innocent Canadians to a US government with little respect for our democratic values or norms.

Nor is this extensive cooperation restricted to the Five Eyes spies. Take the Ontario Provincial Police, which over many years shared large quantities of private, personal information of law-abiding Canadians with their US counterparts who, in turn, passed it along to border agents, resulting in dozens of innocent Canadians being refused entry into the US for trivial reasons.

With Trump's ascension to power imminent, Canada cannot afford to continue allowing government agencies such as CSIS, the CSE and the RCMP to routinely hand over our private information to the US government.

Ministers Goodale and Wilson-Raybould should be working to protect Canadians – starting by making all future cooperation with US spy agencies contingent on the US' compliance with international human rights principles. At a minimum, that means ending all programs of suspicionless online spying, including the bulk collection of metadata. No Canadian should need worry about being placed under a microscope by spy agencies answerable only to Donald Trump.

Above all, it's past time for a complete rethink of how Canadian agencies engage with their US counterparts. Rather than being complicit in the machinery of US-led mass surveillance, our government needs to set a new course designed to protect the security of all Canadians from Trump's powerful and unaccountable spy apparatus.

David Christopher is communications manager for OpenMedia, which works to keep the Internet open, affordable and surveillance-free. openmedia.org

...***Leonard Cohen*** *from pg. 19*

2013). "He'd been in Greece and was unaware of the folk boom, heading to Nashville from Montreal, with a notion of pursuing country music to supplement his income. In my living room, he apologized for his singing and guitar playing, even doubting that what he was writing were songs. I was mesmerized, wanted more.

"After he finished writing "Suzanne," he sang it over the phone and I invited him to an anti-Vietnam War town hall. I dragged him onstage, but he stopped partway, pleading, 'I can't go on.' "I pushed him back to the mic and the crowd went wild."

Cohen was 33 when his recording debut, *Songs of Leonard Cohen* (1967), was released. He was an original voice, haunting, hypnotic, a whisper-like rasp, unconventional, unprecedented and more economical. Critics' labels included "godfather of gloom," "poet laureate of pessimism," and "music to slit your wrists to." "Sometimes, I stumble out of bed, look at myself in the mirror and say, 'Lighten up, Cohen,'" he told audiences, which grew to as many as 600,000 at the Isle of Wight Festival in 1970. Speaking of concerts, he said they made him feel like "some parrot chained to his stand."

His *Hallelujah* – years in the making and released in 1984 – is possibly the most-sung-all-occasions-song of this century, played at weddings and funerals, repeatedly on VH1 after 9/11, at the state ceremony for NDP leader Jack Layton, and at the opening of the Vancouver Winter Olympics. It has been recorded so often that Cohen jokingly called for a moratorium. Two weeks after his death, *Hallelujah* made its first appearance on the Billboard Hot 100 chart and garnered four million US streams in the week ending November 17, 2016.

Nobel laureate Bob Dylan has compared Cohen's songs to "prayers… great songs, deep and truthful, multidimensional, surprisingly melodic, they make you think and feel." *Hallelujah* is "beautifully constructed and the point-blank I-know-you-better-than-you-know-yourself aspect has plenty of resonance for me."

In 1992, Cohen released *The Future.* Included on the album is *Anthem,* which took 10 years to complete – "Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in" – and *Closing Time*, in which he shifted out of the darkness in single stanzas: "All the women tear their blouses off. And the men they dance on the polka dots." Or, "I said to Hank Williams, how lonely does it get? Hank Williams hasn't answered yet. But I hear him coughing all night long, floors above me in the *Tower of Song*."

For five years, he retreated from the public eye, spending it in deep meditation and silence – three years near L.A. and two in Bombay. Meanwhile, his manager and former lover, Kelley Lynch, embezzled his life savings. He would be awarded a symbolic $9 million while she received 18 months' jail time and five years probation for harassment. Broke, he went back to the studio and toured from 2008 to 2014, his spiritual strength evident in four-hour performances and an unmatched late-life renaissance.

Last summer, when he learned she was dying, Cohen scribbled, "Well, Marianne, it's come to this time when we are really so old and our bodies are falling apart and I think I will follow you very soon. Know that I am so close behind you that if you stretch out your hand, I think you can reach mine. Now, I just want to wish you a very good journey. Goodbye, old friend. Endless love, see you down the road."

After burying his father in an unadorned pine box in a family plot in home-town Montreal, his son Adam, a musician who co-produced Cohen's last album, posted, "As I write this, I'm thinking of my father's unique blend of self-deprecation and dignity, his approachable elegance, his charisma without audacity, his old-world gentlemanliness and the hand-forged tower of his work."

Now, one for the ages, Leonard Cohen is gone, leaving behind a lifetime of inspired offerings, a rich, polished, timeless legacy for those who seek inner peace, especially in troubled times.

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...***Post Truth*** *from pg. 11*

John Manley (a former deputy prime minister and frequent corporate elite mouthpiece), "a once-in-a-generation opportunity." The Liberal plan: sell off public assets to raise money for a wave of private investors to build and operate infrastructure. One planner, Adam Vaughan, insists that "to be afraid of the private sector when fixing Canada's infrastructure is short-sighted, stupid, irresponsible."

Really? A November Ipsos Reid/Ontario poll found 75 percent of those surveyed oppose privatization. In London, Paris and Hamburg, governments are bringing work back in-house from private contracts. Ditto for water management in Sooke, Port Hardy and White Rock, garbage collection in Port Moody and recreation in Cranbrook, etc.

Few Canadians deny the need to fix congested roads and crumbling bridges; overcrowded, underfunded public transportation; and emission-reductions to avert climate catastrophe, floods and fires. But privatizations aren't what we voted for.

Closer to home, the Woodfibre fracked gas plant in Howe Sound cleared a hurdle when, at last month's BC Liberal convention, kicked off with "Free Enterprise Friday," a sustained standing ovation greeted the news. "Jobs and the Cleanest LNG in the world," they cheered, "BC is #1" But it's one of five projects promised, by 2020, which might be delivered (maybe) – a $1.6bn fossil fuel investment, 650 construction jobs and a mere 100 ongoing, when/if it becomes operational.

At the same time, a new poll found 73% in BC want to pause Site C Dam construction. BC Hydro admits we won't need new power until 2028, at the earliest. The *poll was conducted by Insights West for DeSmog Canada. In it, 92% support efficiency measures and wind, solar and geothermal power added to the grid, as needed. A small minority favour what Christy vows to get past the "point of no return," before the May election.

A final few words about Word of the Year (WOTY), a labour of love from folks who pore over millions of words to find the ones that pop up most often. The idea: track change in language and choose those that capture "the ethos, mood or preoccupations" over the last 12 months.

The WOTY is the most impactful, the one wee word at the top of minds and tips of tongues as information transmogrified into commodity, truth into a brand and disinformation, a product universally marketed, 24/7. Post-truth encompasses fake news, awash on the Internet and in corporate media, the numerous stories and issues ignored, politics, packaged as a game, and elections, as a half-time show.

Post-truth is created and normalized by elites that fear our collective will, above all else. So it also provides a catch-all awareness, to connect myriad dots and disparate progressive causes together – those that really matter –where they belong. We have much more in common than not, including the desire for health, happiness and connection with others. There's money enough hidden in tax havens, obscene loopholes and subsidies, and dark money, dirty beyond laundering. Our common future is too important to be left to the greedy and their puppets and corporate media stenographers. Only we the people make real change. No one else should, or ever will.

Too revolutionary and far-fetched? Harry Truman said, "I don't give anybody Hell, I just speak the truth and it sounds like Hell to some folks." The unvarnished skinny is, and always has been, so-called "ordinary people." The 90+ percent can find and stand on common ground in collective strength that resides in empathy, compassion and respect for human values, skills, decency and dignity. Justice, equity, the best possible environment and government to serve people not corporations, seem like lost myths. The truth is we have no real choice and little to lose by envisioning a world beyond post-truth. We must stand for and create a better world, and word, in 2017.

* See http://www.insightswest.com/news/seventy-per-cent-of-british-columbians-support-pausing-site-c-construction-to-investigate-alternatives/

Rescuing the Canadian Economy

by Paul Hellyer

The people own the patent to create money. The banks do not! They are simply licensees that enjoy the unique privilege of creating what we call money (bank deposits) to the extent approved by parliament.

So, here we are at the end of another year, and Canada has reached a historic *crossroad.* The existing system of having all money created as debt has reached a dead end. If we borrow more, there is no way to pay it off, and we will be paying interest forever. Similarly, higher taxes are not the answer. They are already too high for people with low income.

The only common sense solution is to have the federal government use its power to have the Bank of Canada create enough money to meet our essential needs. We know that will work because we did it from 1939 to 1974, and it worked like a charm. The only impediment today is the lack of political will.

If you ask a politician or bureaucrat, why they don't support government-created money (GCM), they respond, "That would be inflationary". This is because one of their professors told them so, and they repeat it as rote.

How do I know it is not inflationary? It is because we Canadians created large sums of GCM for 35 years and our economy was no more inflationary than the average.

As anyone in the business should know, it is the amount of money created that determines prices and not who prints it. Money is money whether it is government-created (GCM), or bank-created money (BCM).

Under the current system of so-called "capital adequacy" the banks are really free to increase their capital, print more money, and create an inflationary bubble, as they have on many occasions.

The current system where banks create about 97% of the total money supply, all of it as debt on which interest has to be paid, while no one creates any money with which to pay the interest, is inherently inflationary. That is due to the fact that to keep the economy growing it is necessary to create (a) enough new moneyeach year to pay the interest on the existing debt and (b) enough additional debt money to keep the economy growing, however slowly.

A good example of government-created money being used for a long period without inflationary effects is The Isle of Guernsey. They have printed money for 200 years to pay for all of its public works. The result has not been inflation.The result has been full employment and no debt.

On the other hand the failure of the present system to maintain the value of money can be illustrated by the fact that one U.S. dollar at the time that the Federal Reserve System was established just over 100 years ago, is worth about 3 cents today. Talk about inflation!

Our federal government appears to be hell-bent to ratify and implement CETA, the 600-page Canada-Europe treaty that few, if any, members of parliament have read. Consequently, they can't possibly understand that they are unilaterally amending the Canadian Constitution by giving international banks a veto over our sovereign right to create our own money for our benefit. In effect they will be killing the goose that can lay those golden eggs. To do this is morally intolerable.

One advantage of being old is that I have seen the systems that work and ones that don't. I am 100% convinced that our government is headed in the wrong direction. The stakes are so high, and I feel so strongly that we must try to salvage the situation before it is too late, that I asked two of my visionary friends to join me in retaining Rocco Galati, one of Canada's best constitutional lawyers. We have launched an action in federal court to restrain the government and parliament from implementing CETA, on the grounds that it is beyond their power to compromise the most basic of our sacred rights of self-government.

Fighting the federal government in court is a very expensive procedure. But when our government favours the rich and powerful 1% at the expense of the 99%, there is no alternative.

Please join us on this very critical initiative to rescue our economy.

EVENT **Paul Hellyer** is a former Minister of Defence. He will present these subjects in **Toronto** on December 15th at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 7 pm, 252 Bloor Street West. Free event. In **Vancouver,** there will be short films, panel and discussion on January 25th. VanCity Theatre, 1181 Seymour Street, doors at 6 pm. Suggested $10 donation to cover rental costs. Email: CBRVancouver@gmail.com Phone: 604.329.1706 www.canadianbankreformers.ca

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Mission B.C. *Jan. 25, 6pm* @ Fuel Supplements, 33120 1Ave. RSVP 604-820-1622
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